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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004932

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SUBJECT: ELECTION PREPARATIONS APPEAR ON TRACK - SPECIAL
VOTING TO BEGIN DECEMBER 12

Classified By: Classified by Political Counselor Robert Ford for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. With days to go until the December 15 election and despite the absence of several IECI Commissioners on Out-of-Country Voting (OCV) travel, preparations for domestic election preparations are well on track. Special voting for detainee, hospital, and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) voters is expected to occur on December 12 as planned. Ballot materials, staff, and security are in place to support this early voting, and are on schedule for general voting on December 15. Of particular note has been the surge in IECI media events educating the public about voting.
END SUMMARY.

SPECIAL VOTING COMING SOON

2. (SBU) Special voting for ISF, detainees, and hospitalized voters will take place on December 12. The IECI estimates that over 250,000 voters will be accorded the opportunity to vote at 257 special polling locations. Of these, IECI estimates that over 200,000 are ISF voters, approximately 22,000 are eligible detainee voters, and over 19,000 hospitalized voters. These voters will use the national ballot, which lists over 200 political entities and is three pages long. Although the IECI's publicity office has developed special voting posters and pamphlets to illustrate how to use this 3-page national ballot, it is conceivable that confusion could still occur. ISF voters also have the opportunity to forgo voting on December 12 in favor of voting in their home governorate on December 15.

LOGISTICS ON TRACK

3. (C) On December 7, CEO Adil Allami told PolOff that ballot delivery was on schedule, security logistics were in place, and training for polling day staff would begin on December 8. Allami added that planning for Anbar was firming up, with a planned 154 polling centers and 800 guest workers (flown in to Anbar by the IECI) to supplement local staff. Later that evening, PolOff spoke briefly with UN/IECI operational planner Jodie Clark who confirmed that logistical preparations for the elections were well underway and proceeding as planned. Delivery of polling station kits to governorate warehouses are expected to be completed on December 10 and ready for distribution to polling centers on December 13 as planned. She told PolOff that the biggest logistical hurdle had been moving up preparations for the special voting materials and logistics, but that preparations for December 12 were complete.

4. (C) Over the past few days, CEO Allami, the International Elections Assistance Team (IEAT), and IECI press conferences have given PolOffs an overall picture of the election preparation status. Specific topics are listed below.

-MATERIAL SECURITY: The IEAT reports that AEGIS warehouse security teams have deployed to governorates in preparation for the arrival of polling materials. Iraqi Army units are supplementing security oversight during the delivery of the ballots until Iraqi Police are fully in place. To date, ballot material deliveries have been made to Dahuk, Salahadin, Ninewa, Baghdad East, Baghdad West, Muthanna, and Qadissiya.

-OBSERVERS: The IECI has decided to extend the accreditation deadline to December 10. It has accredited over 182,000 political entity agents and 81,000 observers across 18 governorates to date. Domestic and international observers will also be present at Camp Abu Ghraib, Bucca, and Susse detention facilities.

-CANDIDATE LISTS: The IECI has published the certified candidate lists on its website. In a December 4 press

release, the IECI tempered this release by stating that reserves the right to disqualify candidates in the future if need be.

-STAFF: Polling day staff have been hired and allocated to each polling station. Training for governorate and district level staff has been completed, with polling center staff training on-going. On December 5, CEO Allami confirmed to PolOff that the IECI would be switching inspectors from different governorates in order to diminish the possibility of attempted fraud.

15. (SBU) The IECI has been conducting a wide array of media events ranging from press conferences, outreach events with political entities, and TV and newspaper interviews. CEO Allami, Commissioner Hindawi, and Commissioner Sidqi have given press interviews almost daily over the past week on topics ranging from De-ba'athification to voting procedures. On December 8, the IECI held an outreach session in its tally center for political party representatives serving as monitors during the elections. Chief Electoral Officer Adil Allami, who headed this briefing, told PolOff later that day that the event was heavily attended, and discussions ranged from the complaints procedures to compensatory seats.

16. (U) In a December 8 press conference, Commissioner Safwat Sidqi briefed the media on general election day information. In addition to giving a general overview of elections preparations, Sidqi urged political entities and the public to discourage campaign violence and general unfair campaign practices such as the tearing down of posters. The IECI expects to continue conducting press interviews daily as well as distributing multiple press releases, many of which will discourage campaign violence and intimidation.

KHALILZAD